

MINUTES: Centerville Township Windmill Ordinance Committee, July 27, 2006

Present: Mark Zemanek, Molly Hyde, Richard Light, Carolyn Weed, Travis Nelson, Gary Cook, Joseph Czerniak, David Wurm

Absent: Dale Pleva, Richard Kobetz

Ms. Weed handed out a summary of her extensive research of wind turbine noise and a draft of proposed Centerville Township noise regulations and related commentary (documents attached). Much of the sound we hear on a daily basis is fleeting, such as cars passing. Wind turbine sound would be constant during the extended periods of time while they are operating. This is why it is important to have detailed regulations within our ordinance. There were over 90 noise complaints in Lincoln Twp., WI, some serious enough to result in the power company purchasing properties and demolishing homes in close proximity of windmills. It was suggested that it would be important to require a log of noise complaints and how and when they are resolved. Mr. Light commented that part of the application process should require a general fund to cover various ongoing expenses, such as a maintenance log.

Mr. Light also commented that wind noise itself does cover some other sounds. Ms. Weed pointed out that there are often problems with people that reside in valleys where there is no sound. Sound can travel differently through and around hills than it does across flat land. Wind turbine noise is generally more of a problem downwind from the turbines and also more often at night than during the day. Companies would need to complete sound models to prove there are no adverse effects in those areas. The noise regulations associated with wind energy are far more conservative than other noise ordinances because that noise is potentially always there. Mr. Light inquired whether it would be enough to require a measure of noise within one mile. Ms. Weed believes that would probably be enough distance to catch potential problems. She said an acoustical engineer could direct us to current engineering standards we would want to refer to. She has drawn from sound standards ranging from international recommendations to local recommendations.

A log would allow you at any point to ask for a study in areas where there might have been problems. A post construction measurement would show compliance. Mandatory shut down should be a consequence of unresolved problems.

Discussion moved on to environmental issues. There is not a large concern with avian kill rates, however bat mortality has been a problem in areas of the East and Midwest. The National Park Service has concerns in regard to the piping plover. There are 66 pairs currently on the endangered species list. One third of those are in Leelanau County, mostly on the shoreline, however they do fly around and they do migrate. It is hoped that someone from the park service will be able to attend one of our meetings and help to educate us on possible effects of wind turbines on the National Lakeshore.

View sheds are a topic we would like to discuss. Some conservation easements are in place because a parcel has desirable views. Some view sheds are regulated on the California coast and other areas. Mrs. Keilty was in the audience and commented that she had heard there has already been a real estate transaction that fell through because buyers got wind of a potential wind farm. We would like to follow up on this and discuss property values.

Mr. Czerniak made a comment in reference to the setbacks we had agreed upon at the last meeting. He thought that with those setbacks it would be necessary to own a square parcel of 160 acres in order to place a commercial wind turbine on your property. Mr. Nelson pointed out that owners of contiguous parcels could go together to meet those setbacks.

The next meeting will be August 7 at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Hyde